

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-14

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E.O. 11652 XGDS 1
TAGS SHUM, AR
SUBJECT INTERVIEW WITH GENERAL VIOLA

1. THE EVENING OF JULY 18 I HAD A MEETING WITH GENERAL VIOLA AT MY REQUEST TO DISCUSS THE RESULTS OF MY TRIP TO WASHINGTON. AS USUAL, HE RECEIVED ME ALONE AT HIS OFFICE AT ARMY HQ. HE APPEARED AT EASE AND PLEASED AT THE PROSPECT OF SEVEN DAYS VACATION WHICH HE WILL BEGIN TODAY.

2. I BEGAN BY CONGRATULATING THE GENERAL ON HIS PROMOTION TO COMMANDER OF THE ARMY AND HIS PLEASURE AT THIS EVENT WAS OBVIOUS. OBSERVING THAT I HAD RECEIVED REPEATED TELEPHONE CALLS FROM COMMANDER I CORPS GENERAL SUAREZ MASON TO INVITE ME AND MEMBERS OF MY STAFF TO LUNCHEON, I INQUIRED IF HE COULD PROVIDE ANY EXPLANATION FOR THE GENERAL'S SUDDEN INTENSE INTEREST IN THE AMERICAN AMBASSADOR. VIOLA INDICATED CURIOSITY ABOUT SUAREZ MASON'S INTENTIONS AND SAID HE DID NOT KNOW WHAT MIGHT BE BEHIND IT ALL. HE HAD A FEW NICE THINGS TO SAY ABOUT SUAREZ MASON BUT DID NOT VOLUNTEER ANY INFORMATION ABOUT THE LATTER'S RETIREMENT WHICH IS VIRTUALLY TAKEN FOR GRANTED IN BUENOS AIRES. WHEN I MENTIONED HAVING RECEIVED A GRACIOUS LETTER FROM GENERAL MENENDEZ, COMMANDER III CORP, WHICH STATED THAT LILIANA DEUTSCH SHOULD BE RELEASED
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SOON, VIOLA REACTED WITH SURPRISE AND SOME INDIGNATION SAYING, "SHE SHOULD HAVE BEEN TURNED LOOSE SOME TIME AGO."

3. PROGRESS ON HUMAN RIGHTS. I AGAIN REASSURED VIOLA THAT THE USG WAS NOT DEDICATED TO THE DESTRUCTION OF THE GOA, WE SIMPLY WANTED SOME SPECIFIC EVIDENCE OF

PROGRESS IN THE HUMAN RIGHTS FIELD WHICH WOULD PROVIDE US AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEMONSTRATE OUR APPRECIATION OF THAT PROGRESS. I REITERATED THAT AN INVITATION TO THE IAHRG WAS STRICTLY A BILATERAL MATTER BETWEEN THE GOA AND THE COMMISSION AND WE COULD NOT PARTICIPATE IN ARRANGEMENTS FOR A POSSIBLE VISIT. I ASKED VIOLA HOW HE SEES PROSPECTS FOR A VISIT BY THE IAHRG. VIOLA SAID THAT HE DID NOT SEE THAT A VISIT WOULD BE IMPOSSIBLE. THERE WERE TWO OR THREE OBJECTIONABLE ASPECTS OF THE COMMISSION'S CONDITIONS WHICH WOULD HAVE TO BE CLARIFIED OR WORKED OUT. HE THOUGHT THE GUARANTEE TO PROVIDE ANY AND ALL DOCUMENTATION REQUESTED WAS SIMPLY TOO SWEEPING AND WOULD HAVE TO BE CLARIFIED. HE WAS CLEARLY OFFENDED THAT THE GOA WOULD BE ASKED TO MAKE A GUARANTEE OF NO REPRISALS AGAINST THOSE INTERVIEWED BY THE COMMISSION. HE SAID THIS WOULD CERTAINLY BE OFFENSIVE TO ANY SELF-RESPECTING SOVEREIGN GOVERNMENT BUT THEN ADDED THAT THE OBJECTIVE SOUGHT SHOULD NOT BE A DETERRENT TO THE VISIT. COMMENTING ON THE REQUEST TO VISIT MILITARY PRISONS, VIOLA SAID HE THOUGHT THIS WAS A FOLISH REQUEST SINCE IF ANY MILITARY UNIT HAD PRISONERS IT WISHED TO HIDE IT COULD DO SO WITHOUT THE SLIGHTEST DIFFICULTY. REFERRING TO THE GENERAL TOPIC OF AN IAHRG VISIT HE SAID THAT AS AN OFFICIAL OF A SOVEREIGN COUNTRY HE COULD HARDLY WELCOME AN INVESTIGATION FOR A FOREIGN AGENCY, BUT THAT HE UNDERSTOOD THAT SPECIAL CIRCUMSTANCES REQUIRED PARTICULAR FLEXIBILITY AND HE

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THOUGHT THE COMMISSION'S BASIC REQUIREMENTS COULD BE MET -- AT LEAST HE AND PRESIDENT VIDELA WERE GOING TO MAKE A CONCERTED EFFORT TO DO SO. HE SAID THAT THE SUBJECT WAS TOO URGENT TO AWAIT HIS RETURN AND THAT GENERAL BIGONE OF HIS STAFF WOULD BE IN TOUCH WITH ME IN THE NEAR FUTURE.

4. RELATIONS WITH FOREIGN OFFICE. I TOLD VIOLA I WOULD BE MEETING WITH ACTING FOREIGN MINISTER ALLARA ON JULY 19 AND ASKED IF HE HAD ANY GUIDANCE ON HOW THAT CONVERSATION SHOULD BE HANDLED. HE SAID I SHOULD BE COMPLETELY FRANK WITH ALLARA BUT NOT TO EXPECT TO MAKE ANY PROGRESS. HE ADDED THAT IF ALLARA PROCEEDS TO GIVE ME A HARDLINE LECTURE, I SHOULD SIMPLY IGNORE IT.

5. JUNTA MEMBERS VISIT TO US. I EXPLAINED TO VIOLA THAT ADMIRAL MASSERA WOULD BE VISITING WASHINGTON LATER THIS MONTH AND THAT GENERAL AGOSTI WAS SEEKING A VISIT WITH HIS US COUNTERPARTS AND THAT THESE VISITS BY JUNTA MEMBERS RAISED SOME QUESTIONS IN THE USG AS TO WHAT WOULD BE APPROPRIATE TREATMENT. VIOLA SAID HE WOULD REFER THIS QUESTION TO PRESIDENT VIDELA AND GET

BACK TO ME.

6. RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM. REFERRING TO OUR PREVIOUS CONVERSATION ABOUT THE RIGHT OF OPTION PROGRAM I SAID THAT IT WAS MOVING TO SLOWLY AND SOUGHT HIS HELP ON LOOSENING UP THE PROCESS. HE COMPLAINED THAT THE PROCESS WAS UNMANAGEABLY COMPLICATED, REQUIRING ALMOST A DOZEN FORMAL APPROVALS FOR EACH CASE. HE SUGGESTED I SEE COLONEL SAN ROMAN OF THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT.

7. PRISONER RELEASES. WHEN I RAISED THIS TOPIC HE SAID THE GOA WAS STUDYING THE STATUS OF 1500 PRISONERS WHO WERE PICKED UP BY THE PREVIOUS GOVERNMENT. HE GAVE NO INDICATION OF HOW MANY OF THESE PRISONERS MIGHT BE CONFIDENTIAL

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RELEASED. I OBSERVED THAT WE HAD YET TO SEE ANYTHING DEVELOP IN THE WAY OF RELEASED OF SIGNIFICANT NUMBERS OF PRISONERS. HE INDICATED THEY WERE WORKING ON IT.

8. COMMENT. VIOLA WAS UNEQUIVOCAL IN HIS POSITION THAT HE AND THE PRESIDENT WERE GOING TO CONTINUE TO TRY TO WORK OUT AND AGREED BASIS FOR THE IAHRV VISIT. HE INDICATED THAT FOREIGN OFFICE DISAPPROVAL COULD BE ASSUMED BUT WOULD NOT PREVAIL. IT WAS NOT CLEAR HOW ANY NEGOTIATION WITH THE COMMISSION IS BEING CARRIED OUT.
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